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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed as a tool for English and Welsh businesses wanting to provide basic skills training for their employees. It provides practical solutions to the problems of identifying employees' basic skills needs and selecting the best model of training delivery to address identified training needs. The introductory section discusses basic communication and numeracy skills, literacy and numeracy skill levels in selected countries, and the problems experienced by business and industry because of employees with inadequate basic skills. Presented in section 2 are guidelines for performing the following tasks related to needs assessment: identifying whether an organization has basic skills problems; assessing needs by using the standard form BS5750/ISO9000 (British and international quality control standards), production target monitoring, screening procedures, and job or task analysis; and promoting basic skills support in the workplace. Section 3 details the steps involved in selecting and implementing the best model of training delivery for a given organization: adapting training materials for short courses; setting up short courses, job coaching, staff training in basic skills support, and open and distance learning; and evaluating basic skills support. Concluding the guide is a list of 12 related publications. (MN)

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ED 384 794

BASIC SKILLS SUPPORT

IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

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BASIC SKILLS SUPPORT

IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

ALBSU Registered Charity No. 327550 The Basic Skills Unit

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Foreword

Established in 1980, ALBSU – the Basic Skills Unit – is a Company Limited by Guarantee and a registered charity. It is the national agency for basic skills in England and Wales.

By Basic Skills we mean . . .

"the ability to read, write, and speak in English and use mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general."

ALBSU offers a range of free consultancy and advisory services to basic skills providers, including local authorities, Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), colleges of further education and other training providers and employers in both the public and private sectors. It also:

- **initiates and sponsors a significant range of development projects**
- **produces and publishes teaching and learning materials for trainers and students**
- **organises and funds accredited staff training**
- **manages the Family Literacy Initiative which is working with schools and local providers of basic skills to help parents and their children improve their literacy skills**
- **manages the *Basic Skills at Work* programme concerned with work related basic skills**
- **sponsors a research programme looking both at the scale of need and at the effectiveness of basic skills education and training.**

Through the Basic Skills at Work programme we have sponsored some 40 pilot projects working with nearly 200 companies and public sector organisations throughout England and Wales. For most of these, the programme provided a first opportunity to look at what their requirements were for basic skills, what level of competence their employees had and how they might begin to address these needs. Many would have liked to take on this area of work themselves using their own training staff but found it difficult to know where to start.

Basic Skills Support in Business and Industry has been written and researched by Janet Byatt and Karen Davies from the Business Education Consultancy on ALBSU's behalf. Its purpose is to point companies, who want to provide basic skills training for their employees, in the right direction. It provides practical training solutions for addressing basic skills issues and is designed for anyone who has some responsibility for training in the work place, whether formal or informal.

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SECTION 1

Introduction

There has been a growing realisation over the last few years that the skills of our workforce do not always match the new demands being made on them. One of the reasons why the workforce cannot meet new demands is because their basic skills are just not good enough.

Initiatives such as BS5750/ISO9000 and Investors in People, together with management concepts such as Total Quality Management, have encouraged companies and organisations to consider the interface between quality production and a quality workforce. Companies now need to have in place programmes of development catering for all workers at every stage of their time in the organisation.

This publication describes the need to take account of basic skills when considering and planning staff development at all levels.

Research shows that something like 1 in 6 of the population over the age of 16 has serious problems with reading, writing, understanding or speaking English or with basic Maths. Most of these people have some skills, but the level of skills they have is not good enough for the demands of society and industry. Many of these people are in work and it is becoming increasingly evident that this skills deficit needs to be met positively with appropriate training.

Failure to tackle this problem will result in a continuing decline in the ability of the workforce to meet new challenges. Poor basic skills have a real cost, described in more detail later. Tackling basic skills deficits also has a cost, but will lead to real benefits in efficiency and reliable quality.

KEITH PALLET, Director of Comech Ltd

"Industry cannot compete without key core skills at all levels of staff. By key core skills I mean the ability to communicate in written and spoken English and numeracy. Our continued investment in basic skills training among our workforce has enabled us to *double our turnover*. It is worthwhile investing in the confidence of people. With a confident and well-trained workforce, you can do anything."

LIZ RICHARDSON, Project Leader, Wakefield Accommodation Project

"The course, which was designed to address report writing, was very useful in reassuring people that it was a learnt skill and not a natural talent. There was a noticeable improvement in the levels of confidence of the participants who were very positive about the benefits of the course, and the fact that there was no sense of stigma attached to it."

What are basic skills?

By basic skills we mean :

"the ability to read, write, and speak in English and use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general."

This working description defines what is meant by basic skills in general terms.

We need to focus on what basic skills mean within the context of a working environment.

The ability to read English

This is obviously an important skill and ranges from the ability to recognise single words and decipher very simple written instructions to the ability to read, comprehend and process complex pieces of writing.

Staff in operative posts will usually need at least to be able to cope with basic levels of reading. However in an increasingly paper-based society, levels of reading skill required are rising.

The ability to write English

This skill ranges from the ability to complete very simple forms or to write very simple messages through to completing information on accident report forms. Higher levels of basic writing include compiling reports and more complex written tasks. Accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar becomes increasingly important.

Staff at the basic operative level will usually need at least to be able to cope with simple form-filling. Changing work practices have meant that more staff are now being required to complete more complex forms – eg. accident report forms – or to write reports.

LYNN JONES, Patient Services Manager, Redbridge Health Care

"Most of the staff were initially very nervous but within a very short time felt confident enough to make a significant contribution within their groups. The course has highlighted the lack of opportunities for training for staff below front-line management level. The Company has decided to do more training with this group of employees."

Staff from Occupational Therapy, Medical Secretaries and Reception Staff had accessed training in Communication Skills through ALBSU's Basic Skills at Work project.

The ability to speak English

This skill covers speaking and listening, from communicating on a 1:1 basis, understanding spoken instructions and taking messages, right through to giving short talks or presentations.

Staff at the basic operative level will clearly need to have the skills to understand simple spoken instructions. Again changing working practices mean that increasing numbers of staff, usually at supervisory levels, need to be able to give short talks and conduct effective meetings.

The ability to use mathematics

This skill ranges from the ability to do very simple numerical calculations, counting in batches and simple measuring, to more complex calculations and interpretation of data.

All staff at operative levels need at least to recognise numbers. Increasingly the work place demands that people can read and interpret graphically presented information. Other number tasks such as weighing, measuring and routine calculations are likely to be specific to particular processes eg. a bricklayer will need to be able to perform very specific calculations. These will be quite different from the skills required by an operative on a packing line. Some number tasks will be quite complex, even though they are routinely performed by employees at operative levels.

The changing level of demand for basic skills

The level of demand for basic skills is increasing. In recent years this increase has been caused by:

- changing work practices and organisation, leading to the demand for a more flexible work force
- changes in production and information technology
- demands put on working practices by quality initiatives such as BS5750/ ISO9000, IiP
- the general loss of a pool of unskilled jobs from the job market
- demands put on work practices by changes in legislation, particularly Health and Safety.

Recently conducted research indicated that well over half of employers place a great deal of importance on adequate basic skills. Improved basic skills were likely to bring the following benefits :

- better communication skills
- improved efficiency and productivity
- lower error rates
- increased ability to work unsupervised
- improved quality
- improved customer relations
- increased profit.

How good are our basic skills ?

ALBSU has commissioned research over several years to quantify basic skills problems amongst the adult population.

The National Child Development Study in 1981 and the British Cohort Study in 1991 looked at the abilities of adults in their early 20s. Other surveys have been conducted with people in their 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s. All of these point to around 16 per cent of the adult population having the kind of significant problems with basic literacy and numeracy which severely limit the jobs that they are able to do competently.

In the last few years ALBSU has developed a set of Standards for Basic Skills. These Standards describe how and to what level people need to use communication and numerical skills when doing particular tasks. The Standards use four levels for reading, writing, speaking and listening and three levels for numeracy.

Communication	*Numeracy*
Foundation	Foundation
Level 1	Level 1
Level 2	Level 2
Level 3	

From other research conducted by the Institute of Manpower Studies, we have established that most jobs need Level 1 communication skills and Foundation Level numeracy. Standards of competence are often expressed in technical language that is difficult to understand. However below is an example of what everyone should be able to do to operate at these basic levels.

Communication Skills

- Read and understand a short feature in a newspaper or magazine.
- Use reference material such as Yellow Pages or a dictionary to get simple information.
- Deal with forms such as an application form for a job.
- Write formal letters, reports or notes giving up to four separate ideas.

Numeracy Skills

- Use money to pay in cash, checking change and receipts.
- Plan the use of money and time through selecting foods by price and comparing the cost of items.
- Measure and calculate areas of rectangular shapes.
- Understand simple tables, graphs and bar charts.

It is interesting to compare UK statistics with those of other developed nations, such as France, USA, Belgium, Spain and Canada.

France

10-20% of the adult population face varying degrees of literacy problems.

USA

22% of American adults showed 'the lowest level of proficiency' in a national survey.

Canada

16% of the adult population identify themselves as having literacy problems.

38% have difficulties with the reading demands they encounter in their everyday lives.

Spain

20-25% of the population cannot write their address on an envelope.

Australia

28% of the adult population have difficulty filling in forms.

Belgium

15-25% of the adult population have basic skills problems.

Greece

15-30% of the adult population have basic skills problems.

Portugal

15-30% of the adult population have basic skills problems.

Netherlands

10% of the adult population (not including those whose first language is not Dutch) have basic skills problems – thought to be an underestimate.

We can see that all developed nations are likely to have considerable numbers of the population with basic skills problems. Most of these people will be in work of some kind.

How does this affect business and industry ?

Given the definition of basic skills and the earlier description of how these might apply in business and industry, we can speculate on the likely effects of basic skills problems:

- reduction in efficiency and productivity
- higher costs
- lower profits
- difficulties with adapting to change
- poor customer relations
- poor communication skills within the organisation.

All of these problems come with a price tag. The cost to your organisation can be estimated by referring to recent Gallup research figures quoted in *The Cost to Industry*; ALBSU 1993. Companies were asked to put specific figures to actual costs of basic skills problems.

Costs for a company employing 51 staff or more

Approximate number of:	*(a) Number (average per company)*	*(b) % which could have been avoided if basic skills were better (average)*	*(c) Typical cost of one cancelled order/remedial action (average)*	*(d) *Total cost due to basic skills difficulties among staff (average)*
Customers orders cancelled per year because of errors, problems or misunderstandings	30	38.7%	£2,397	£27,600
Customer orders despatched or produced incorrectly each year	161	41.4%	£1,123	£74,600
Customers lost per year because of errors, problems or misunderstandings	12.5	35.3%	£5,957	£28,330
Members of staff employed whose main task is to check and approve the work of others	30.1	2.3%	£12,473	£28,330
Employees needing to be recruited externally each year for posts which could be filled internally if basic skills were better	35.9	11.2%	£2,183	£8,800
			Average Total	**£165,530**

*Overall costs are calculated by taking the percentage of (a) indicated at (b) and multiplying this by (c). Figures at (d) were calculated by computer using the raw data.

These are the average costs for companies employing over 51 staff.

The cost to companies employing 51-100 employees is estimated at £86,000 per company each year.

The cost to companies employing 1,000 or more employees is estimated at £500,000 per company each year.

You will be able to use these figures to gain a rough estimate of how much basic skills problems could be costing your company.

The results of questions from this Gallup survey were then grossed up to provide an estimation of the total cost to industry in the U.K. The figure arrived at is in excess of £4.8 billion. Improving the basic skills of the workforce could increase efficiency, increase quality, improve communication and increase profits.

Assessing the Need

Has your company or organisation identified any of the following?

- problems with handling customers
- errors in ordering
- errors in accounting
- problems with estimation
- poor oral communication skills eg. on the telephone
- poor message taking and giving
- poor written reports
- high staff turnover
- reluctance among the workforce to transfer jobs – staff inflexibility
- failure to comply with Health and Safety and other regulations
- difficulties with meeting production targets
- high wastage levels
- inappropriate responses to written instructions.

There are many factors which contribute to these problems but basic skills could be one of them.

You need to examine the basic skills demands of your workplace and the skills of your workforce to help you to plan appropriate and effective basic skills training.

Use the checklist on How to do it 1 to help you identify how far your company has basic skills problems.

In order to identify the need for Basic Skills Training in your workforce use a procedure which is already in place to give you the information you require.

1. External Quality Procedures

- BS 5750/ISO9000
- Investors in People
- National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ)
- Health & Safety.

2. Internal Quality Monitoring

- Production monitoring
- Staff performance.

3. Workforce issues

- Recruitment
- Screening and assessment
- Induction
- Appraisal
- Job analysis.

HOW TO DO IT 1

How to identify if your company or organisation has basic skills problems

STEP 1 Look at the checklist of indicators and tick any of the problems which have been a cause for concern for your company or organisation.

STEP 2 Estimate the percentage of occasions when this has been a cause for concern over the past year. This will be difficult, but good estimation and guesswork should help you to quantify the problem.

For example:

Reports: out of every 10 reports produced in the company how many are poorly written, judging both on the quality of the information presented and on the technical aspects of report-writing such as grammar, punctuation and spelling?

STEP 3 Assess how much these problems are caused by the need for training in specific tasks. What percentage of these problems could be targeted with training ?

STEP 4 You could now begin to estimate what savings in terms of efficiency could be made if specific training programmes were put into place.

HOW TO DO IT 1

CHECKLIST

Indicators	% annual occurrence	% to be targeted for training
● problems with handling customers ❑		
● errors in ordering ❑		
● errors in accounting ❑		
● problems with estimation ❑		
● poor oral communication skills e.g. on the phone ❑		
● poor message taking and giving ❑		
● poor written reports ❑		
● high staff turnover ❑		
● reluctance amongst the workforce to transfer jobs ❑		
● inflexibility of staff ❑		
● failure to comply with Health & Safety and other regulations ❑		
● difficulties with meeting production targets ❑		
● high wastage levels ❑		
● inappropriate responses to written instructions ❑		
● absenteeism ❑		
● poor time-keeping ❑		

1. External Quality Procedures

BS5750/ISO9000

Drawing up, implementing and reviewing standards allows you to identify each process in your organisation and the demands it makes on workers in terms of basic skills. A BS5750 walk through would highlight one or more areas of potential difficulty, for example :

- reading/understanding specialised vocabulary
- calculations and using formulae
- specifications and calibrations.

See How to do it 2 for an example of this approach.

Investors in People

Investors in People aims to help organisations improve their performance by releasing the full potential of their employees.

This planned approach has four major strands :

- setting and communicating business goals
- identifying the skills required to meet these goals
- developing employees to meet the business goals
- evaluating and reviewing training and development to assess effectiveness.

The Investors in People standards explicitly state that there should be a process for regularly reviewing the training and development needs of all employees. There should also be a focus on the training needs of all new recruits and continual development and improvement of existing employees.

The procedure you adopt for identifying training and development needs should take account of the basic skills issue. For instance a staff appraisal system, of whatever form, should provide the opportunity to discuss basic skills training needs which are relevant to the tasks performed by individual employees. For example, employees working on a packing line where there is a need for checking of weights, should be asked directly if they require support training in metric measurement. Their knowledge of this skill should be checked and training given if there is a shortfall.

Remember that Investors in People is about enabling your employees to realise their full potential. Basic skills problems can prevent this realisation. Often carefully targeted training can release potential quickly and efficiently.

RAY BURRIDGE, Quality Assurance/Training Manager of Allen & Heath

"Basic skills support has so improved communication skills within the company that we are now applying for Investors in People and ISO9000. Basic skills training has proved extremely beneficial in meeting the Managing Director's requirement for better communication within the organisation."

Health and Safety legislation/COSHH

All organisations have to comply with the requirements of this legislation, which requires:

- the need to communicate statutory information
- training of personnel
- identification of bad practice / failure to comply with regulations
- accurate documentation
- adherence to procedures.

Any difficulties with implementing Health & Safety legislation or with adherence to regulations may be caused by the basic skills factor.

Staff with basic skills difficulties may have problems with reading and understanding complex instructions and regulations and there may then be non-compliance.

Problems may also occur with inaccurate or incomplete documentation.

The connection between non-compliance with regulations and basic skills problems needs to be recognised. Carefully targeted training can then be planned.

JUNE TORGESON, Human Resources Manager of Grundfos Manufacturing

"Involvement in basic skills support will enable UK manufacturers to remain competitive by encouraging the workforce to be more self assured and receptive to training and education."

HOW TO DO IT 2

How to assess the need using BS5750/ISO9000

You can use your BS5750/ISO9000 documentation to assist you in assessing the basic skills demands in your workplace.

EITHER: you can conduct a walkthrough on your BS5750/ISO9000 *Working Instructions* and observe the process described. You will then look for aspects of the process which require basic skills. This walkthrough is the same procedure as the *Task Analysis* described in the next section on Internal Quality Monitoring – **see How to do it 5.**

OR: you can read through your BS5750/ISO9000 documentation and highlight areas where basic skills are needed. An example of how this approach can be used is described below.

STEP 1

Take a set of BS5750/ISO9000 Working Instructions, read them carefully and highlight any aspect of the task which requires a reading, writing, numeracy or oral communication skill.

For example:

BS5750/ISO9000 audit for basic skills at Fullwood Ltd.

On page 18 there is one sheet from the working instructions of a stores department in a dairy equipment manufacturer in Shropshire. Quality monitoring had indicated problems with incorrect numbers of items in storage bins and in completed and dispatched orders.

The process described is part of the picking and packing required to fulfil equipment orders. Aspects of the process which require basic skills have been highlighted.

STEP 2

Once you have highlighted which aspects of the process require basic skills, you then need to decide what those basic skills are. You will need to use the Communication Skills and Numeracy Skills Standards chart in the back of this book to help you with this.

For example:

You highlight – "The bin card will be amended to show the quantity picked..."

The numeracy skills involved in this aspect of the task are:

- counting, or counting in batches
- writing numbers in figures.

These skills relate to the Numeracy Skills Standards:

7.2 Report in writing information presented in numbers.

7.3 Count and report on batches, quantities between 25 + 1000.

STEP 3

Now you have identified the basic skills required for the process in your Working Instructions, you can use this information to plan support for staff who are having difficulties with this aspect of their work.

For example:

Identifying the basic skills requirements for this aspect of the procedure in the Stores at Fullwood's indicated that :

- counting in batches
- subtraction
- estimation
- correct transcription of number

were the essential skills for this task. A short course using the bin location card described in these Working Instructions is contained in **How to do it 8a.**

2.3 EXPORT ORDERS

The packing list details are not recorded in the Stores Office register, otherwise the procedure is as 2.1 and 2.2.

2.4 PICKING AND PACKING (Home Market).

When the packing lists have been vetted, registered and tied up as necessary with their picking lists they are either passed to the Hosier store, Country Made, Post Room or the Stores Office depending on how they have been annotated and registered.

The Storeman will take the packing list and its attached picking list if relevant, into the Stores binned area and collect, in his truck, the quantities of all parts listed on the picking or packing list. The bin card will be amended as necessary to show the [1] quantity picked and the [2] remaining stock in the bin. If there is [3] insufficient or nil stock of a part, the Storeman will [4] annotate the packing or picking list, either "X" quantity sent "X" quantity to follow (T/F), or with "•" meaning the total quantity of the particular part is T/F. When an item has a serial number, the Storeman will [5] write the serial number of the relevant item on the packing list.

When all available parts have been picked, the Storeman takes them to his packing area and packs them into cartons or bundles [6] depending on the size, shape and weight. Each carton, bundle, etc. is identified by marking it with [7] the order number and delivery address.

The [8] packing list is annotated to show the total quantity of cartons, bundles, etc. into which the order was packed. This annotation will be used as the loading check list for orders being dispatched by Fullwood's own vehicles, hired vehicles or being collected by the customer's vehicles.

The completed packing list will be put into the [9] relevant delivery area pigeon-hole in the Stores Office. The packed order will be located on the loading bay and the picking list can be put to salvage.

2.5 ORDERS TO BE POSTED (Home Market).

The Storeman will pick the order as in 2.4 but when packing he will [10] include the duplicate copy of the packing list in the carton with the goods. He will [11] address the carton with the order number and full postal address for delivery.

The [12] packing list annotated, to show quality, weight, type of service, etc., being posted in the consignment, total weight, type of service to be used, e.g. Ist class post or Data Post and the cost of postage. Dependant on the type of service used, [13] the relevant documentation required by the Post Office is also completed.

HOW TO DO IT 2

1. quantity picked	• counting or counting in batches • writing numbers in figures
2. remaining stock in the bin	• subtraction of number picked from number on bin card
3. insufficient or nil stock in the bin	• estimation of number
4. annotate the packing or picking list	• acting on information available • clear handwriting
5. write the serial number	• writing numbers in figures • accurate transcription of numbers • clear writing
6. depending on the size, shape and weight	• estimation of size • estimation of weight • understanding of shape • acting on available information
7. order number and delivery address	• transcription of number • transcription of address • spelling • clear handwriting
8. packing list annotated	• correct transcription of number • writing numbers in figures
9. relevant delivery area pigeon-hole	• matching of words/figures • acting on available information
10. include duplicate copy	• acting on available information
11. address the carton	• transcription of number • transcription of address • spelling • clear handwriting
12. packing list annotated to show quantity, weight, type of service etc., cost of postage	• counting • weighing • acting on available information • looking up costs on a table of information • transcribing numerical and graphical information
13. relevant Post Office documentation completed	• filling in forms • transcribing numerical and graphical information

2. Internal Quality Monitoring

Production Monitoring

Internal monitoring of production or efficiency targets such as Total Production Maintenance and Statistical Process Control may indicate areas of concern. An analysis of processes and procedures with a view to basic skills may reveal problems which could be solved with appropriate training. For example, *How to do it... Sheet 8c* describes a course set up in response to problems observed with Overall Equipment Efficiency (OEE) documentation at Colman's of Norwich. An analysis of the errors in calculation of percentages led to a specific short course.

PETER LEGGETT, Training Officer, Colman's of Norwich

"We wanted to give people the skills and confidence to do the job, to improve their self-confidence, deal with general anxieties and prepare them for new responsibilities. The training developed was very successful and we are already looking ahead to plan further courses in numeracy and communication skills."

How to do it 3 outlines how you can use Production Monitoring to assess the need for basic skills support.

Staff performance

As part of your organisation's commitment to quality you may have a system in place to identify groups of employees who need training to meet the demands of organisational targets eg.

- changes in work practices
- need for increased flexibility
- updating of equipment or machinery.

A consideration of basic skills training should be an integral part of the analysis of training need and incorporated into any training delivery. Staff involved in developing training programmes should be aware of the basic skills issue and have training in order to incorporate into courses support for those with basic skills difficulties.

HOW TO DO IT 3

How to assess the need using production target monitoring

STEP 1

Identify an area of your company or organisation where production monitoring indicates that targets are not being met, or not being met consistently.

STEP 2

Conduct a skills audit amongst the group of employees who work in this area. This audit will assess whether the skills of employees match those required for the job and will also include a check on levels of basic skills. This skills audit will be :

- **by interview – see How to do it 4**
- **by screening test – see How to do it 4**
- **by job analysis – see How to do it 5.**

A job or task analysis is an efficient method of gathering the information you require and may be less threatening than an interview or screening test.

STEP 3

You will have identified some mis-match between the skills required and the actual abilities of staff. There will also be some aspects of basic skills where there are difficulties. You will now be able to use this information to plan specific training. This could be by a short course or by Job Coaching – **see How to do it 8 and 9.**

STEP 4

Evaluation of this approach to assessing need for basic skills support is important and should :

- **identify clearly the skills, including the basic skills, required for the production process**
- **quantify the skills' deficits discovered, particularly the difficulties with basic skills**
- **identify the training strategies required to address the skills' deficits**
- **evaluate the effectiveness of the basic skills support**
- **monitor the impact on production targets.**

3. Workforce Issues:

Recruitment

Recruitment procedures, including job applications, interviewing, or aptitude and validity testing may highlight concerns about basic skills.

Screening and assessment

You may well have an initial screening process in place. This could be

- by application form or letter
- by interview
- by specific aptitude testing
- by basic skills testing.

Awareness of the basic skills issue is necessary to interpret the responses to screening procedures. The information gathered from screening procedures should not be used to screen people out of work. Many excellent workers will have basic skills difficulties to some degree and their loss would not benefit the company.

Screening should be used to inform you of employees' existing skills and then to inform training policy and planning.

How to do it 4 is a screening checklist which will help you to identify basic skills problems in your screening procedure.

Induction

During initial training and induction programmes, and when familiarisation training occurs for new jobs, machine or work practices, basic skills problems will be identified. This will be apparent when there are difficulties with:

- learning a range of tasks or procedures
- the speed of learning
- higher than average rates of error.

These are all possible indicators of basic skills problems.

Appraisal

The systems and procedures used in staff appraisal should enable all employees' training needs to be discussed.

Basic skills should be seen as another area of training need rather than as a threat to a person's job or promotion prospects.

Job analysis

This is a task-centred approach which examines the needs of a job rather than those of the individual. For example a close analysis of the numeracy demands of a particular task will give specific information about the range of basic skills needed to carry it out. This helps to identify training needs.

In the example described in detail on the *How to do it 5*, a supervisor from a food processing plant has analysed the skills required by a palletising person.

This analysis can be used to identify potential or actual problem areas and then to provide a focus for training.

HOW TO DO IT 4

How to assess the need using a screening procedure

Use these checklists to help to identify basic skills problems in your screening procedure.

SCREENING CHECKLIST

Application form/letter

Look for:

- spelling errors in simple words, particularly own name and address ❑
- poorly formed or immature handwriting ❑
- omissions or incomplete information on application forms ❑
- mixed lower and uppercase letters ❑
- vagueness about dates ❑

SCREENING CHECKLIST

Interview

Look for:

- misunderstanding of questions ❑
- vague replies to questions ❑
- incorrect use of words ❑
- nervous, hesitant speech ❑
- signs of physical stress eg. yawning, nail-biting ❑
- poor time-keeping ❑

SCREENING CHECKLIST

Aptitude testing

- tasks omitted/not tackled ❑
- apparent lack of comprehension of requirements of task ❑
- finishing tasks too quickly or very slowly ❑
- extreme nervousness ❑
- avoidance of tasks ❑
- inconsistency between results of written tasks compared to much better manual/ practical skills ❑

Basic skills testing will provide clear information about the basic skills attainment of new and existing employees. It will not however give you good information on what a particular employee's potential might be.

The information gained from screening is not about screening out potential employees, but about planning in basic skills support.

To screen for reading and maths ALBSU publishes *"Assessing Reading and Maths"*.

HOW TO DO IT 5

How to assess the need using a job or task analysis

STEP 1 Select a job or task which you have identified as being a cause for concern.

STEP 2 List all the requirements of the job – the job description or job analysis. This should include all aspects of the job including Health & Safety, responsibilities for reporting progress/problems, training and paperwork requirements.

You could use BS5750/ISO9000 Working Instructions as a source of this information. You could also collect this information by observing the task in operation.

STEP 3 Take each aspect of the job in turn and list what basic skills are needed to complete it:

- **writing skills**
- **reading skills**
- **oral communication skills**
- **number skills.**

STEP 4 You can then attempt to assign each of these skills to a level, or use the chart reproduced on pages 26 and 27 or go to the back of the book to see a copy of a chart which maps basic skills standards to NCVQ Core Skills Levels.

STEP 5 Use this information to identify precisely the training needs of individual workers. For instance you may pick up that a particular process has a high level demand for a specific numeracy skill.

- an unskilled operator on a packing line may need to have very good estimating skills in order to achieve specific tolerance levels in the packed weight of orders.

The example shown is a job analysis for a palletising person in a food processing plant. The requirements of the job are listed with an analysis of the skills needed for each aspect of the job. This information was then used to develop a short course for this group of employees in completing the specific paperwork for the job, as it was recognised from the job analysis that this was a cause for concern.

EXAMPLE JOB ANALYSIS

Job **PALLETISING PERSON**	Requirements of job	Skill required
	Strength	Must be physically fit – may need to rebuild pallets etc.
	Operation of pallet inverter	After training must be able to use pallet inverter correctly/ safely
	Operation of electric pallet truck	After training must take practical electric pallet truck test Follow verbal instructions and demonstrate understanding by using truck safely
	Paperwork	Must be able to complete simple format sheets, eg., pallet record Must be able to complete pallet tickets involving copying long numbers, must ensure pallet cards and pallet records match Must be able to complete paperwork quickly and accurately ensuring it is legible Must be able to complete and understand a detailed safety check sheet
	General skills	Good numeracy skills to count and record number of outers on pallets Must be able to relay their understanding either verbally, physically or in writing
	Health & safety responsibility	Attend briefings, listen to talks/videos Complete detailed safety check sheet
	General notices and company information	Especially important that this person can read and interpret signs and notices, eg. 'wear your hard hat', etc. Read and understand company information Attend and contribute to briefings

Job analysis for a palletising person, conducted by Caron Green of Jus-Rol, Amble, Northumberland.

ALBSU Standards for Reading and Writing Skills (abridged)

Reading Skill 1	*Foundation Level*	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
Read and understand text in the form of letters written instructions, manuals, notes, orders, etc.	Use and act on simple text (up to six sentences or one paragraph)	Understand and act on a written source (e.g. a letter up to one page long)	Choose and use appropriate material from more than one written source	Select and evaluate material from several written sources for a specific need

Reading Skill 2	*Foundation Level*	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
Read and understand graphical material such as tables, signs charts, labels, plans, maps, etc.	Get the main idea from a simple source (e.g. sign with a single message)	Understand and act on a graphical source up to one page long (e.g. a town map, price list, sign with multiple messages)	Select material from more than one graphical source (e.g. complex tables, plans)	Select and evaluate material from several graphical sources for a specific need

Reading Skill 3	*Foundation Level*	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
Use reference systems such as filing systems, libraries, databases	Use a simple list	Consult a reference source to obtain simple information, (e.g. yellow pages, dictionary)	Use a reference system to obtain specific information (e.g. find a book in a library or a file in a filing system)	Select and use appropriate reference systems for a purpose (e.g. research an issue)

Writing Skill 1	*Foundation Level*	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
Write accurate letters, notes, reports or messages	Write short simple notes or letters conveying up to two separate ideas	Write reports letters or notes conveying up to, four separate ideas	Write material in a specialised format (e.g. specifications, contracts, formal letters)	Write material in a variety of appropriate styles and formats according to need

Writing Skill 2	*Foundation Level*	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
Complete forms or other pre-formatted documents	Fill in a basic form (e.g. write an order form, booking slip, receipt)	Complete a simple form (e.g. application form, time-sheet, claim form)	Complete an open-ended form (e.g. accident report form, telephone message form)	Complete forms in a variety of appropriate styles and formats as required

ALBSU Standards for Numeracy and Oral Communication skills (abridged)

Numeracy Skill 1	*Foundation Level*	*Level 1*	*Level 2*
Handle cash or other financial transactions accurately, using till, calculator or ready reckoner as necessary	Transactions of up to seven similar items at a time, give change if necessary	Transactions of up to 20 items at a time, give change and calculate simple discounts	Transactions of any number of items at a time, and calculate complex discounts, OR use foreign currency

Numeracy Skill 2	*Foundation Level*	*Level 1*	*Level 2*
Keep records in numerical or graphical form	Record simple numerical information (e,g, count small batches)	Find the appropriate information and make a simple record based on it (e.g. simple stock-taking)	Find the appropriate information from several complex sources, make a record based on it (e.g. stock-taking and sales audit)

Numeracy Skill 3	*Foundation Level*	*Level 1*	*Level 2*
Make and monitor schedules or budgets in order to plan the use of time or money	Plan and monitor small amounts of time and money (up to 7 days or £250)	Plan and monitor amounts of time, money or expenditure (up to 4 weeks or £2,000)	Plan and monitor large amounts of time, money or spending (over 4 weeks or up to £20,000)

Numeracy Skill 4	*Foundation Level*	*Level 1*	*Level 2*
Calculate lengths, areas, weights or volumes accurately using appropriate tools, (e.g. rulers calculators, etc.	Simple calculations on familiar items in either metric or imperial units	Calculations on items of unfamiliar or irregular shape in either metric or imperial units	Calculations on items of complex or composite shape, use scale drawings, convert between metric and imperial units

Oral Comm. Skill 1	*Foundation Level*	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
Give information to other people on the telephone or face to face	Give information on a single topic to one familiar person	Give information on several topics to unfamiliar people	Explain or describe things to people in order to help them	Prepare and make a formal presentation to a group of people

Oral Comm. Skill 2	*Foundation Level*	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
Getting information from other people on the telephone or face to face	Getting information on a single topic from one familiar person	Getting information on several topics from unfamiliar people	Find, select and use appropriate information from several people to solve a problem	Find, select and use complex information from several people to solve a problem or support a case

Promoting Basic Skills Training

How to do it 6 gives you an action plan for implementing a support programme in your workplace.

Once you have identified a need for basic skills support, you will need to consider how to promote the idea amongst the workforce.

The best method of promoting basic skills training will be as part of your company's overall training programme. This will enable you to develop a positive attitude and response from the workforce. Basic skills support will be seen by staff as an integral part of the company's commitment to its workforce and not as paternalistic or as part of a staff cutting exercise.

Access to training courses should be marketed as an opportunity. It should be clear that staff will benefit from giving their time:

- increased productivity
- less wastage
- increased bonus payments
- increased job satisfaction
- less hassle
- increased confidence
- improvements in skill
- access to qualifications
- improved job prospects
- access to qualifications.

STEVE BROOKER,
Personnel Manager, Eden Vale, Minsterley, Shropshire.

"Eden Vale , Minsterley got involved in Basic Skills training through ALBSU's Basic Skills at Work pilot towards the end of 1992. Due to the sensitive nature of the skills gap we had identified and the fact that the training was low-cost we only asked for volunteers to attend the sessions. These were a huge success, not only for the individuals concerned but also in relation to the credibility of the support team delivering the training.

When the pilot was completed we decided to focus the training on who we believed needed it in order to meet business requirements.

This we have done with success, partly due to the sympathetic way in which people have been approached and the counselling and training skills of the trainers."

HOW TO DO IT 6

How to promote basic skills support in the workplace

STEP 1

Discuss your plans for basic support with groups of key workers such as:

- **supervisory staff**
- **team leaders**
- **unions**
- **employee representatives**
- **production managers**
- **personnel & training staff.**

Their understanding and support is crucial to promoting training. They will be able to give suggestions about course content and delivery, as well as the best ways of encouraging staff to access support.

STEP 2

You now need to decide course content and the training model you will use. **How to do it 7, 8, 9, and 10** will help with this. The process of identifying and approaching participants will now start. Approaches can be made in the following ways :

- **direct 1:1 approach, usually by team leader or supervisor**
- **direct approach to a group by the company's training manager or a supervisor**
- **via newsletters or bulletin boards**
- **via a note in the pay packet.**

The method chosen will depend on the circumstances in your organisation and the particular skills of the staff involved in promoting the training. Generally speaking the direct approach has proved to be the most effective, either with individuals or groups. The benefits to individuals and to the company should be emphasised.

You may not always need to approach individuals in this way. Sometimes basic skills support can be integrated into other training and provided for all participants as part of that training.

STEP 3

As with any marketing exercise, you will need to evaluate its impact. **How to do it 12** gives you a framework for this. Is your marketing strategy reaching the right staff? If not, then you will need to change tactics.

SECTION 3

Selecting the best model of Training Delivery

Once you have pinpointed the needs of your organisation, you will want to consider the ways in which you might meet them.

There are several possible options – you need to choose the right one for your organisation :

- short courses
- job coaching
- staff training and integration
- open and distance learning.

Short courses

When a very specific training need has been identified, then a short course will be an efficient and effective way of meeting that need. The course will need to be designed and planned with the needs of those with basic skills problems in mind.

Basic skills difficulties will affect :

- course content
- length of course
- pace
- numbers in group
- checking of learning
- opportunities for practice.

Courses should be short and self-contained. The aims of the course should be quite specific, but ideally should fit into the whole training programme of the organisation.

In-house staff delivering the courses will need to be aware of the needs of participants who have difficulties with basic skills. They should be able to adapt planning and materials to suit all needs. They may need training in this area.

See How to do it 7 for ideas on how to adapt training materials for short courses.

How to do it 8 gives guidelines on setting up short courses for staff with basic skills problems and shows examples of 3 courses:

8a	a short course designed to cover the completion of a store's record card where basic numeracy has been highlighted as causing problems
8b	a short course covering the completion of a problem notification form where reading and writing difficulties have occured
8c	a longer course covering Overall Equipment Efficiency (OEE) calculations where there have been problems with numeracy

Problem	*Short course*
• Filling in specific production documentation	• 2 hour course covering the purpose and content of the document
• Calculating % variations in Statistical Process Control	• 10 x 2 hour sessions covering the specific maths required for this operation
• Completing accident report forms	• 2 x 2 hour course covering the purpose of the form and giving practice in its completion
• Non-compliance with Health & Safety regulations, resulting from poor reading skills	• 2 hour course covering the purpose of the form and giving practice in its completion
• Poor telephone messages	• 2 hour course covering the need for clear messages and simulated and real practice using a standard pro-forma

WAYNE THORNTON, Maintenance Engineer, Soft Drinks, Colman's

"To achieve TPM we need to empower people to make their own decisions. We want to encourage individual team members to measure and improve their own work stations. To implement TPM successfully, we want the calculations used on the line understood by those who work with them. The short training course has accomplished this."

Colman's of Norwich has implemented a Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) team approach in their soft drinks department. This new approach had highlighted the need for training to develop the required numeracy skills.

Job coaching

This is an alternative to running a short course and helps to address very specific needs. This specific need may have been highlighted by the job or task analysis carried out on ***How to do it 5***.

A trained and skilled 'Job Coach' works on an individual basis with an employee on every step of the process to be learned.

For example, the Job Coach could:

- work with an employee on the entire process involved in, say, photocopying, or an aspect of production line work
- show an employee how to use a particular form and assist with practice.

Job coaching can last for a few minutes or several days, and can be spread over a period of time to suit the complexity of the task, according to the demands of the task or the needs of the employee. Job Coaches can also act as mentors for employees on open or distance learning.

Staff working as Job Coaches will need primarily to be skilled in the task concerned, but will also need to be fully aware of the needs of employees with basic skills problems and have the personal skills to coach other employees.

They need:

- good communication skills
- ability to understand the needs of others
- understanding of different ways of learning
- ability to encourage and create confidence.

How to do it 9 gives ideas on setting up a Job Coaching programme and training Job Coaches.

PAUL PESTELL, Ford

Ford of Dagenham has organised a Basic Skills awareness course for selected training personnel. Paul Pestell, Manager of Continuation Training for Ford Motor Company, South East England, believes that this course is: **"essential knowledge for training staff and for supervisors of people who may have a basic skills need."** The course **"helps them to understand why some things do not get done, for example written reports."**

The training has also had a significant impact on the organisation of training in the Company – **"We have developed standards for my staff to use when deciding on placing contracts with training providers. We now insist on evidence of how the training is delivered so that we can assess the readability of materials and ease of learning for the intended audience."** Paul will be developing basic skills awareness training for all levels in the Company.

Staff training

All staff involved in any aspect of training eg.

- **personnel staff**
- **Job Coaches**
- **supervisory staff**
- **training staff**

should receive some training which covers basic skills issues. This training is cost-effective in terms of gains in overall efficiency and ensures that all aspects of the company's operations are covered. The training can result in major rethinking of company training policy and its impact will be felt throughout the organisation.

The training involves examining the range and scale of the basic skills issue and developing skills in working with the people who have basic skills problems. Accredited courses are available.
The purpose of this strategy is to give all staff involved in training the knowledge and skills essential for supporting employees across the full range. A whole company approach will mean that the basic skills issue is embedded in all training situations.

How to do it 10 gives ideas on the identification of appropriate staff and an outline of a training course.

Open and distance learning

The organisation can put into place a whole company training policy which includes open and distance learning.

Employees can access a wide range of opportunities, including basic skills support:

- **open learning**
- **distance learning**
- **supported self-study**
- **IT-supported learning**
- **resource and materials bank.**

Good resources, including computer-based resources, are critical to the success of open and distance learning. Resources need to be easy to access and of good quality.

Advice on open and distance learning materials can be obtained from :

- **Open College**
- **Open University**
- **local Colleges of FE and HE**
- **local libraries**
- **local Careers Services**
- **ALBSU .**

Staff support will be needed for open and distance learning, particularly where there are basic skills difficulties.

HOW TO DO IT 7

How to adapt training materials for short courses

The best source of training materials for basic skills support is authentic material from the workplace. In other words, staff need to be able to operate using the materials which are required by the organisation or by the task in hand.

Unfortunately these authentic materials are often :

- **poorly produced**
- **difficult to understand**
- **written in unnecessarily technical language.**

This information can easily be made more accessible in a number of ways, including layout, vocabulary and readability. Readability is an attempt to match the reading level of the written material with the understanding level of the reader. Material which is in general use in the workplace should aim to have a readability level which will enable the majority of the workforce to understand the information.

STEP 1 Choose the material you will be using in your training. Conduct a Readability test – see next page.

Note that material which is in general circulation, eg Health and Safety information, company instructions, forms and documentation, should have a readability level of about 10.

STEP 2 Re-write the material:

- **keep the readability level down to 10**
- **keep only essential technical vocabulary**
- **discard unnecessary information.**

HOW TO DO IT 7

Readability Test

1	Select a text	
2	Count 10 sentences	
3	Count number of words which have three or more syllables	
4	Multiply this by 3	
5	Circle the number closest to your answer. 1 4 9 16 25 36 49 64 81 100 121 144 169	
6	Find the square root of the number you circled 1 4 9 16 25 36 49 64 81 100 121 144 169 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ·8 9 10 11 12 13	
7	Add 8 | | Readability level	

The lower the readability level the easier something is to read and understand. A readability level under about 10 will be able to be understood by most people.

STEP 3 Now format the re-written material using the following guidelines:

- **keep sentence length short**
- **avoid cramming too much information onto one page**
- **use a clear, good-sized type face or font**
- **avoid writing everything in capital letters**
- **use graphics and illustrations wherever possible**
- **use good quality paper – ensure good quality printing and reproduction**
- **use pastel coloured paper if possible.**

HOW TO DO IT 7

Adapting Materials

Problem

Employees not complying with company regulations

JUS-ROL LTD
ISSUE OF KEY FOR VENDING MACHINES

Name: Clock No: Date of Issue:

The Company has provided a key with which to obtain free drinks from the Vending Machine, (3 per day for full-time employees and 1 per day for part-time employees).

Lost keys should be reported immediately to the Personnel Department, who will provide a replacement key for a fee of £5.00. If a second key is lost a further replacement will not be issued.

If the employment is terminated for whatever reason, the employee must return the key otherwise a payment of £10 will be deducted from any monies outstanding, including accrued holiday pay. The Company reserve the right to recover any outstanding amount through application to the Courts.

Signed _____ Date _____
(Employee)

Before

- Cramped layout
- Poor choice of print style
- Complex vocabulary
- Long Sentences

Solution

Short course covering various company requirements including clocking on and the use of vending machines

Ref: Klix

Issue of Klix Key For Vending Machines

Name: ..... **Clock No:** ..... **Issue Date:** .....

1. The company has provided a key so that **free drinks can be obtained from the vending machines.**
2. Full time employees – 3 drinks per day
   Part time employees – 1 drink per day
3. **Lost keys must be reported to the Personnel Department**
   If you wish to buy a new key it will cost £5.
4. If you lose 2 keys you will not receive a replacement.
5. **When you leave, the key must be returned to the Personnel Department. If it is not, £10 will be deducted from your pay.**
6. The company reserve the right to recover any outstanding amounts through application to the Courts.

Employee Signature: .....

Date: .....

After

- Better print style
- More open layout
- Simplified vocabulary without losing meaning
- Numbered points
- Highlighting of important points

Material prepared by Caron Green of Jus-Rol Ltd

HOW TO DO IT 8

How to set up short courses

STEP 1 Identify the Need

Identify the need and the short course which will address this need.

For example:
You identify some problems with completing specific documentation. This seems to be a general problem, though some staff are better than others. You decide to set up a short course – perhaps 2 hours – to take staff through the documentation.

STEP 2 Planning the Course

Identify participants for the course and the necessary course content.

For example:
You decide that all staff involved in completing this documentation should attend the course. The content of the course will include:

- **the purpose of the documentation**
- **how it fits into the overall procedures of the organisation**
- **what information is required**
- **issues such as legibility**
- **opportunities for guided practice.**

STEP 3 Delivering the Course

Determine the size of the group for this training, the location and the timing of the course.

For example:
You decide that a group of 8 is appropriate (remember the smaller the group the more individual attention is possible). A series of courses is booked into your training room at the end of a shift.

STEP 4 Evaluating Short Courses

Monitor the effect of the training in order to establish whether it has achieved its objectives. **See How to do it 12** for ideas on evaluation.

For example:
You arrange to sample completed documentation from each participant, weekly or monthly over a period of time. There is a general improvement; the one or two individuals still having problems can be given support on a one to one basis – (see the information on Job Coaching).

HOW TO DO IT 8A

Short course on completing documentation

Bin location form – Stores

Problem

Inaccurate quantities of items in stores bin

- inaccurate counting?
- inaccurate subtraction?
- inaccurate transposition of numbers?

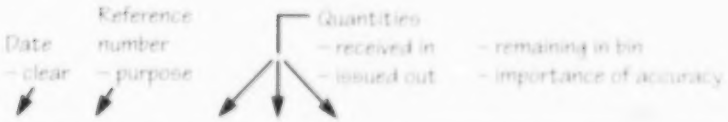
Purpose

Who uses the form?

- store operatives
- ordering and despatch
- store supervisor
- QA

Discussion

- design of form
- use of calculators?



DATE	REF. NO.	QUANTITY RECEIVED	QUANTITY ISSUED	BALANCE	DATE	REF. NO.	QUANTITY RECEIVED	QUANTITY ISSUED	BALANCE

PART NO. _____ DESC. _____ BIN LOC. _____

Practice

- counting in batches of 5, 10, 20, 10
- matching numbers accurately
- writing numbers in figures
- use of calculator
- values of numbers
- mental arithmetic
  - addition
  - subtraction

HOW TO DO IT 8B

Short course on completing documentation

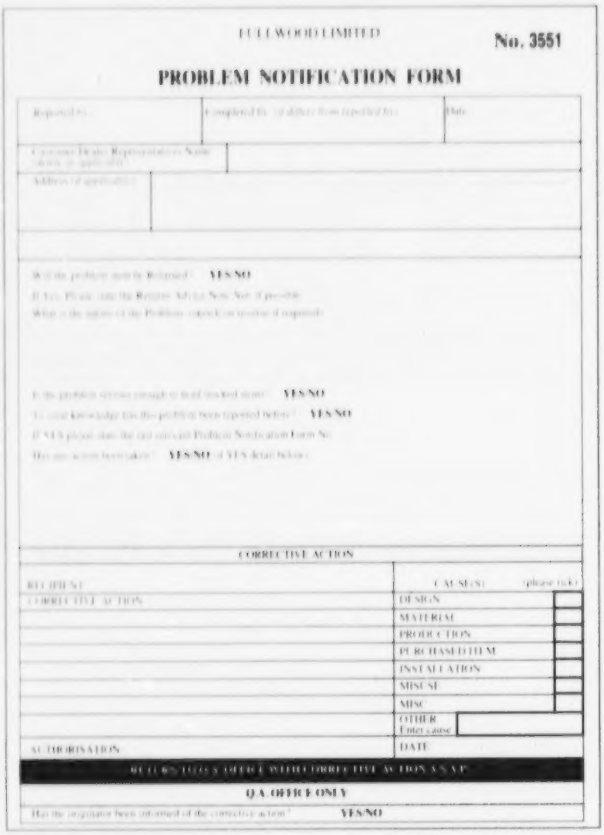
Notification Form

Problem

Poor quality or inaccurate written information

- poor reading skills?
- poor writing skills?
- poor understanding?

Purpose



FULLWOOD LIMITED No. 3551

PROBLEM NOTIFICATION FORM

Reported by: | Completed by (if different from reported by): | Date:

Customer Dealer Representative Name (delete as applicable):

Address (if applicable):

Will the problem need to be Retested? YES/NO

If YES, Please state the Retest Advice Note Nos. if possible

What is the nature of the Problem (attach an overlay if required):

Is the problem serious enough to halt tracked units? YES/NO

To your knowledge has the problem been reported before? YES/NO

If YES please state the last relevant Problem Notification Form No.

Has any action been taken? YES/NO If YES detail below:

CORRECTIVE ACTION

REQUEST CORRECTIVE ACTION | CAUSE(S) (please tick)

DESIGN
MATERIAL
PRODUCTION
PURCHASED ITEM
INSTALLATION
MISUSE
MISC
OTHER Enter cause

AUTHORISATION | DATE

RETURN THIS OFFICE WITH CORRECTIVE ACTION AS A.S.A.P.

Q.A. OFFICE ONLY

Has the originator been informed of the corrective action? YES/NO

Who uses the form?

- operatives
- supervisors

Who needs the information?

- Quality Assurance
- suppliers

Importance:

- Quality Control
- reputation
- customers
- profit

Technical aspects:

- legibility
- deleting
- describing
- essential spelling

Discussion

- design of form
- difficult aspects of form, e.g. technical words

Practice

- completing parts of the form
- sketching
- writing brief reports
- neat writing
- spelling addresses
- spelling technical words
- decision making

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HOW TO DO IT 8C

Short course on numeracy for Overall Equipment Efficiency (OEE) calculations

Problem

Inaccuracies in calculating % in OEE documents

- Breakdown of numeracy skills for a production process OEE calculations at a major manufacturing company.

Purpose

Numeracy skills in OEE calculations – production process

- reading off data from production charts and tables
- understanding large numbers used in production outputs e.g. 1,251,816
- rounding up to the nearest thousand
- using a calculator to work out the output per hour given the production rate per minute
- converting output in bottles to output in cases by dividing by 3,6, and 12
- adding up production downtime in minutes and hours
- calculating total shift runtime in minutes
- expressing downtime as a percentage of total runtime
- rounding up a calculator answer to 2 decimal places
- recording data on graphs
- interpreting and discussing trends on graphs

- who needs the information?
- why is the information important?
- supervisors
- operatives
- Q.A.

Discussion

- self assessment
- problems with OEE calculations

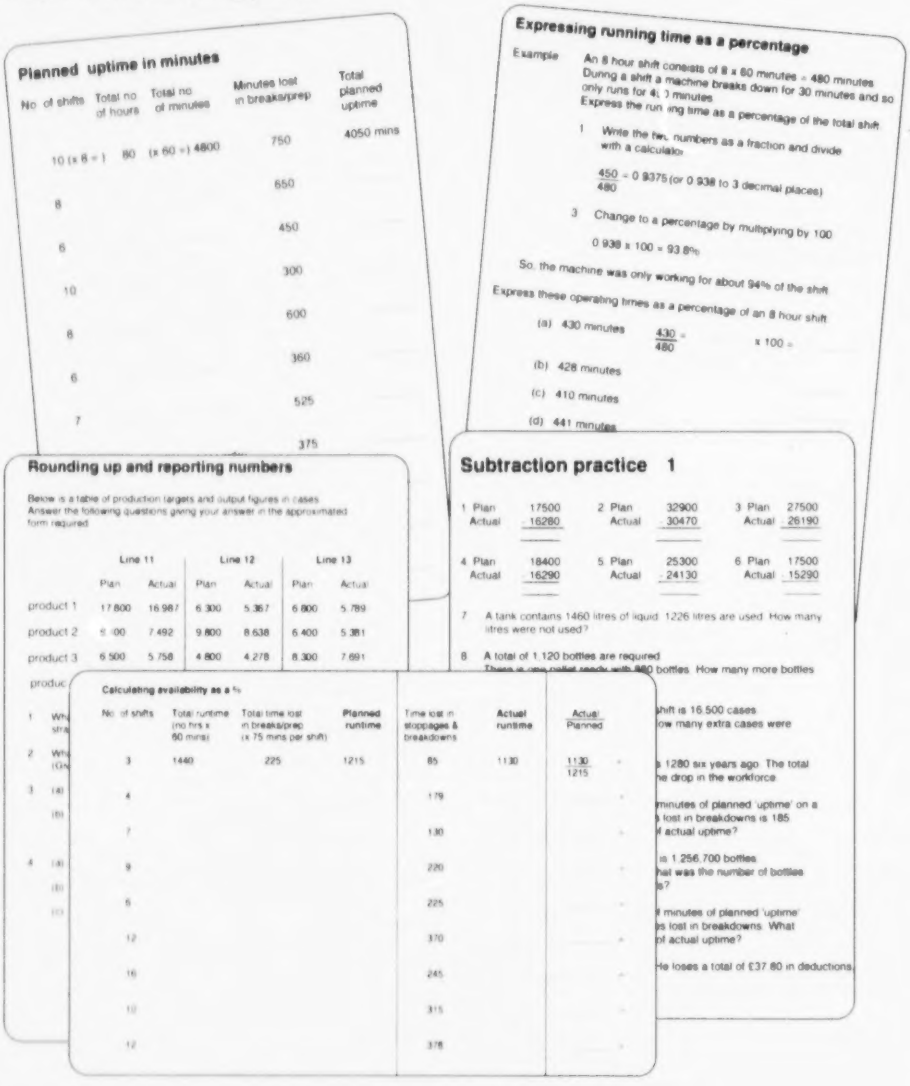
Practice

- decimal place
- place value
- mental calculations
- rounding up and rounding down
- reading large numbers
- basic % calculations
- OEE line graphs
- OEE % calculations
- fractions
- decimals to %
- averages
- use of calculator

HOW TO DO IT 8c

An example of worksheets for short courses on numeracy for OEE

It is important in basic skills short courses to use authentic materials. Real forms and documents must be used. See **How to do it 8a and 8b.** Work should be designed to practice the actual skills required. These 5 worksheets were designed to help operators develop and practise the skills required to complete Overall Equipment Efficiency (OEE) calculations in a major manufacturing plant.



Planned uptime in minutes

No. of shifts	Total no. of hours	Total no. of minutes	Minutes lost in breaks/prep	Total planned uptime
10 (x 8 =)	80	(x 60 =) 4800	750	4050 mins
8			650	
6			450	
10			300	
8			600	
6			360	
7			525	
			375	

Expressing running time as a percentage

Example An 8 hour shift consists of 8 x 60 minutes = 480 minutes.
During a shift a machine breaks down for 30 minutes and so only runs for 450 minutes.
Express the running time as a percentage of the total shift.

1 Write the two numbers as a fraction and divide with a calculator.

$\frac{450}{480} = 0.9375$ (or 0.938 to 3 decimal places)

3 Change to a percentage by multiplying by 100.

0.938 x 100 = 93.8%

So, the machine was only working for about 94% of the shift.

Express these operating times as a percentage of an 8 hour shift.

(a) 430 minutes $\frac{430}{480} =$ x 100 =

(b) 428 minutes

(c) 410 minutes

(d) 441 minutes

Rounding up and reporting numbers

Below is a table of production targets and output figures in cases. Answer the following questions giving your answer in the approximated form required.

	Line 11		Line 12		Line 13	
	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual
product 1	17 800	16 987	6 300	5 367	6 800	5 789
product 2	8 100	7 492	9 800	8 638	6 400	5 381
product 3	6 500	5 758	4 800	4 278	8 300	7 691

Subtraction practice 1

1. Plan 17500, Actual 16280
2. Plan 32900, Actual 30470
3. Plan 27500, Actual 26190
4. Plan 18400, Actual 16290
5. Plan 25300, Actual 24130
6. Plan 17500, Actual 15290

7 A tank contains 1460 litres of liquid. 1226 litres are used. How many litres were not used?

8 A total of 1 120 bottles are required.

Calculating availability as a %

No. of shifts	Total runtime (no hrs x 60 mins)	Total time lost in breaks/prep (x 75 mins per shift)	Planned runtime	Time lost in stoppages & breakdowns	Actual runtime	Actual / Planned
3	1440	225	1215	85	1130	1130 / 1215 =
4				179		=
7				130		=
9				220		=
6				225		=
12				370		=
16				245		=
10				315		=
12				378		=

Materials and course designed by Bob Read of Norfolk Adult Basic Education.

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HOW TO DO IT 9

How to set up job coaching

STEP 1 Identify Job Coaches and Trainees

The job analysis has highlighted particular basic skills problems and you have decided that the job coaching approach is going to be an appropriate way of tackling the required training. Firstly you need to identify suitable candidates for training as Job Coaches and staff who will require Job Coaching.

For example:

You identify that one or two individuals are having problems with reading instructions which are part of a production process. A supervisor from this production line has the knowledge and personal skills to act as Job Coach.

STEP 2 Training for Job Coaches

Set up training for the Job Coach - this training should include awareness of basic skills problems and the skills required for assisting people with basic skills needs.

For example:

You decide to set up a 2-day training course for a small group of supervisory staff who will take on Job Coaching roles. The course covers :

- **the range and scale of basic skills problems**
- **the need for basic skills in the organisation ie. what skills are required to complete particular tasks**
- **task analysis**
- **understanding the needs of people who have basic skills problems**
- **matching the method of coaching to the needs of individual learners**
- **evaluation methods.**

HOW TO DO IT 9

STEP 3 Set up Job Coaching Programme

You now need to set up a Job Coaching programme which will enable trained personnel to work on a 1:1 basis with staff. The approach to this can be quite informal and the training usually takes place on the shop floor.

For example:

A Job Coach will work on a 1:1 basis with an individual who has problems reading instructions. The coaching will include :

- **understanding the purpose and importance of the written instructions**
- **reading and understanding the instructions**
- **demonstration and observation – carrying out the task correctly**
- **practice of each part in the process, including any variations which might be part of the process**
- **reinforcement.**

STEP 4 Evaluate Job Coaching

Monitor the effect of the Job Coaching in order to establish whether it has achieved its objectives. **How to do it 12** gives ideas on evaluation.

For example:

You arrange that the trainee should be observed whilst working. This should occur over a period of time to ensure that no further problems are occurring. Job Coaches should be involved in monitoring and evaluation so that extra support (for instance when there are changes to documentation or procedure) can be provided quickly and efficiently. Any individual still experiencing difficulty can then receive further coaching.

HOW TO DO IT 10

How to set up staff training in basic skills support

STEP 1 Identify staff

If you have decided to take this approach to your organisation's training needs, your first step will be to identify which staff should be offered the training. Such staff will primarily be those who already have a training role even if an informal one. They will also ideally:

- have good interpersonal skills
- be open to new ideas
- be able to use initiative
- be responsive
- be flexible.

STEP 2 Training programme

Set up a programme of training to give staff the opportunity to develop expertise in supporting employees with basic skill needs.

Training Outline

- the range and scale of basic skills needs
- the effect of basic skills problems on the individual
- strategies for identifying basic skill difficulties
- approaches to methods of delivering and evaluating support
- awareness of readability and other communication issues
- evaluation and monitoring

It should be noted that an accredited training programme is available via City and Guilds which links with TDLB standards from January 1995. Further details are available from City and Guilds of London Institute, 46 Britannia Street, London WCIX 9RG. Telephone 0171-278 2468.

HOW TO DO IT 10

STEP 3

Monitoring and Evaluation

Feedback from staff who have undergone training will provide information in the short term.

Monitoring of the impact of staff training in basic skills will be longer term and should be apparent through achievements in terms of company goals and targets, staff job satisfaction and staff morale. **How to do it 12** gives a format for evaluating the impact of training.

HOW TO DO IT 11

How to set up open and distance learning

STEP 1 Choosing your Options

The decision to implement open learning or distance learning will be part of an overall company training policy. The need for basic skills support should be clearly identified and catered for in either option.

For example

You have decided to set up an Open Learning Centre to which all staff will have access, usually during their free time. Planning will take account of the fact that there is a need for basic skills support within your organisation – this will affect resourcing, staffing and marketing.

STEP 2 Resourcing Open and Distance Learning

You will need to make decisions about resourcing the Centre and how access is to be managed.

For example:

You know that there is a need for improvement of numeracy skills in one department of your organisation. You buy in resource materials which will be needed to support this need. Look at the section on Further Information for sources of advice.

Staff will be allowed to access the Centre half an hour before the end of a shift without losing pay, or during breaks and days off.

STEP 3 Staffing Implications

You need to make decisions about staffing. The Centre will need to be manned for security reasons during opening hours or some other security system set up, but specialist staff need only be available at specific times.

For example:

Your Centre is staffed by someone at a clerical grade during opening hours. This person can assist people to find suitable materials for study, give information and maintain the resource bank.

You decide to bring in to the Centre a trainer from your organisation who will be available for two one-hour slots during the week. Staff who are known to need support for their numeracy can then be guided to attend these sessions.

STEP 4 **Staff Access**

Staff who need support are guided to access the Centre. It is important that the Centre is promoted appropriately as an access point for all staff and that there is no stigma attached to attending.

For example:

Staff who are identified as needing numeracy support are approached and offered the opportunity to attend the centre. The need for improved efficiency is stressed as is the fact that many other staff are accessing the Centre. Accreditation for basic numeracy skills is offered.

STEP 5 **Evaluation**

Monitor the effect of training in order to establish whether it has achieved its objectives.

For example:

You arrange for the employee's performance to be monitored. This should occur over a 3-6 month period to ensure that there are no further problems. If one or two individuals are still having problems they can be offered further 1:1 support (**see Job Coaching**) or possibly redeployed.

HOW TO DO IT 12

How to evaluate basic skills support

STEP 1

As part of staff training you need to build in evaluation which will allow you to measure its effects.

The " feel-good " factor:

- **ask participating staff to evaluate the effectiveness of the training or support**
- **ask supervisory staff to evaluate whether the support has improved matters:**

  are staff:
  - more confident?
  - more flexible?
  - more receptive to training?

- **ask staff to evaluate specific areas covered in training:**
  - are oral communication skills improved?
  - is form-filling improved?
  - is report-writing improved?
  - is information in the workplace readable?
  - are numerical calculations more accurate?

CHECKLIST	
• Has the training closely matched the needs identified?	☐
• Has the training model chosen been appropriate?	☐
• Have the training materials been useful?	☐
• Are staff attending support sessions regularly?	☐
• Have staff valued the basic skills support?	☐

Quantifiable information will allow you to demonstrate the effects of basic skills training and the impact this can have on your company.

- Compare the following figures **before** basic skills support and **after** training:

CHECKLIST	before	after
• production targets		
• accidents at work		
• complaints from customers		
• machine efficiency		
• absenteeism		
• staff turnover		
• wastage rates		

Action Points

1. **Review** your organisation's training needs:

- what short term needs are there ?
- what long term needs are there ?

2. Which of these training needs has a **basic skills element?**

3. You should now have a list of **short and long term training needs** where basic skills is at least an important issue. Looking at this list :

- which of the items can be met by existing training staff ?
- will these staff require training in order to support trainees? If yes, then arrange training.

4. Look at the **models of delivery** described and decide which is the most appropriate for the needs of your organisation and its employees. It may be that your organisation will need a purpose-designed approach, amalgamating aspects of several models.

5. If you are using your own staff, a way forward is to set up a **planning meeting** to work on clear aims for the programme:

- objectives for individual employees
- objectives for the workforce in general
- costings for resources
- staff time commitment
- impact on work schedules
- estimate of benefits to the organisation
- details such as location, timing.

6. If you feel that the needs cannot be met by company staff, identify a source of **external support**. Planning meetings might need to be set up in the same way as above.

ACTION POINT CHECKLIST

- Training needs ☐
- Staffing ☐
- Resource requirements ☐
- Accommodation ☐
- Models of delivery ☐
- Costings ☐

ALBSU Communication Skills Standards mapped to NCVQ Core Skills

		FOUNDATION	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
READING	READING TEXTUAL MATERIAL	1.1 Read and understand (up to one paragraph with short simple phrases and sentences).	6.1 Read and understand a variety of text (e.g. short features in a newspaper or a magazine). 1.4	13.1 Choose and use appropriate material from more than one written source. 2.4	17.1 Select and evaluate material from a wide variety of written texts. 3.4
		1.2 Follow simple instructions (up to 6 steps, one per step).	6.2 Follow written instructions - each step could contain up to 3 short sentences. 1.4	13.2 Select material from more than one graphical source (e.g. complex tables, plans). 2.4	
			6.3 Consult a reference source (e.g. Yellow Pages, dictionary) to obtain simple information. 1.4		
	READING GRAPHICAL MATERIAL FOR EVERYDAY PURPOSES	2.1 Understand and act on signs and labels with single messages.	7.1 Understand and act on signs and labels with multiple messages. 1.4		17.2 Find and interpret information which is presented in graphical and textual form. 3.4
		2.2 Follow a route on a map or plan.	7.2 Plan a journey using maps.	13.3 Understand the purpose and meaning in a text and make a judgement from the information. 2.4	
		2.3 Find specific pieces of information from simple tables (no more than 2 variables).	7.3 Find information from complex tables, with at least 2 variables and with additional sources/keys. 1.4		
		2.4 Follow instructions given in the form of pictures or diagrams.			
	USING REFERENCE SYSTEMS			14.1 Use a reference system to find specific information (e.g. find a book in a library or a file in a filing system).	18.1 Use a range of reference systems (e.g. using a library to find a variety of material in order to research a topic).
				14.2 Organise material into a given reference system - alphabetical, numerical or date order and use the system created.	18.2 Select and create a reference system.
WRITING	COMPLETING FORMS AND PREFORMATTED DOCUMENTS	3.1 Read a basic form (e.g. order form, booking form, receipt), to find out what is required.	8.1 Read a form (e.g. application form, claim sheet), to find out what is required. 1.4		
		3.2 Fill in a basic form (e.g. order form, booking form, receipt).	8.2 Fill in a form (e.g. application form, claim sheet). 2.2		
	COMMUNICATING IN WRITING	4.1 Write short simple notes or letters conveying up to two separate ideas.	9.1 Write formal letters, reports or notes conveying up to four separate ideas. 2.2	15.1 Complete forms requiring detailed information (e.g. accident report form). 2.2	19.1 Write in a variety of styles and formats to convey complex information and opinions. 3.2
				15.2 Write material in a specialised format (e.g. curriculum vitae, formal letters, leaflets). 2.2	
		4.2 Write short simple pieces about ideas and experiences.	9.2 Write several paragraphs about ideas and experiences. 1.2	15.3 Write in a variety of styles to convey information and opinions on everyday or familiar issues. 2.2	19.2 Write vividly and effectively in appropriate lengths and depths to convey ideas, feelings and experiences. 3.2
				15.4 Write effectively to convey ideas, feelings and experiences. 2.2	
ORAL COMMUNICATION	CONVERSING WITH ONE OTHER PERSON	5.1 Give information on a single topic to a familiar person.	10.1 Give information on several topics in a formal or semi-formal situation. 1.1		
		5.2 Get information on a single topic from a familiar person.	10.2 Get information on several topics in a formal or semi-formal situation. 1.1		
			10.3 Hold a conversation in a formal or semi-formal situation. 1.1		
		5.3 Hold a conversation with a familiar person.	10.4 Support and reassure someone who is in a unfamiliar situation. 1.2		
	CONVERSING WITH MORE THAN ONE PERSON		11.1 Make introductions and farewells for a group of people. 2.1		
			11.2 Give information to a group of people through a short talk or presentation. 2.1		
	EXTRACTING INFORMATION FROM AUDIO VISUAL MATERIAL		12.1 Get information from a live talk or lecture.		
			12.2 Get information from a radio or TV broadcast or recording. 12.2		
	MAKING A PRESENTATION				20.1 Select and prepare material to make a presentation. 3.4
					3.3 20.2 Make a formal presentation.
	PROVIDING, OBTAINING AND EXCHANGING INFORMATION AND OPINIONS			16.1 Explain or describe an activity, place or object in a formal situation. 2.3	21.1 Explain or describe a complex activity, place or object to help one person or several people to do something. 3.3
				16.2 Find, select and use information gathered from several people. 2.3	21.2 Put and justify a complex case orally to one other person. 3.3
				16.3 Put and justify a case orally to one other person. 2.3	21.3 Contribute to a group discussion in order to make a decision. 3.3
				16.4 Contribute to a discussion in a small group. 2.3	

NCVQ Core Skills Level

ALBSU Numeracy Skills Standards mapped to NCVQ Core Skills

	FOUNDATION	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2
USING MONEY IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS	1.1 Make cash payments, calculate total costs of 3-7 items, check change and receipts. 1.2 Receive cash payments, calculate total costs of up to three items, give change and receipts. 1.3 Make non-cash payments, calculate total costs of 3-7 items, complete documentation and check receipts. 1.4 Receive non-cash payments, calculate total costs of up to 3 items, check documentation and check receipts.	B.1 Make cash and non-cash payments, calculate total costs of 4-20 items with discounts, check change and receipts. B.2 Receive cash and non-cash payments, calculate total costs of at least 3 items, give change and receipts. 2 3 B.3 Share payments equally between 4-12 people.	14.1 Make and receive cash and non-cash payments, calculate total costs of items with discounts percentages including fractions, check and give documentation, change and receipts. 14.2 Share payments between a minimum of 4 people 2 2 where costs are not shared equally. 14.3 Calculate and convert amounts of money between 2 2 sterling and foreign currencies. 14.4 Calculate total costs of up to 10 items in a foreign currency, make cash payments, check change 2 2 and receipts.
SELECTING GOODS AND SERVICES IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS		9.1 Select goods and services by price and quality, compare costs of up to 5 items with different base units of multiples of 2 and 4. 9.2 Select investment and credit arrangements, compare annual percentage rates shown in decimal forms, choose the best interest rate.	15.1 Select goods and services by price and quality, 2 2 compare costs of up to 5 items with at least 2 different base units which are not multiples of 2 and 4. 15.2 Compare interest rates shown in decimal and fraction forms, choose the investment/credit 2 2 arrangement chosen.
PLANNING THE USE OF MONEY AND TIME IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS	2.1 Select goods by price, compare costs of 3-5 items with the same base unit. 2.2 Plan the use of money, make a plan including 3-5 items, calculate total costs between £20-£250. 2.3 Record the use of money, calculate total costs between £20-£250 of 3-5 items, record items, costs and total spent. 2.4 Plan and schedule events, calculate start and finish times from up to 3 sources of information.	10.1 Plan the use of money, make a plan including 2 2 5-20 items, calculate total costs between £20-£2000. 10.2 Record the use of money, calculate total costs 2 2 between £20-£2000 of 5-20 items, record items, costs and total spent. 10.3 Plan and schedule events, calculate start and 2 2 finish times from 4-8 sources of information.	16.1 Calculate average income/expenditure, mean and median averages from up to 12 items. 1 2 16.2 Plan and record the use of money, make a plan including 5-20 items, calculate total costs between 1 2 £20-£20000.
MEASURING LENGTHS AND CALCULATING AREAS IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS	3.1 Measure lengths using metric and imperial units. 3.2 Mark up lengths using metric and imperial units. 3.3 Calculate areas of rectangles from lengths in the same whole unit.	11.1 Measure curved and irregular lengths using 1 1 metric and imperial units. 11.2 Mark up lengths using metric and imperial units, 1 1 keeping wastage to a minimum. 11.3 Calculate areas of shapes including composites 1 1 of rectangles, rectangles and triangles, using metric and imperial units from lengths in the same whole unit. 11.4 Make scale drawings using ratios of 1:10, 1:50 or 2 2 1:100.	17.1 Measure curved and irregular lengths using metric 2 2 and imperial units, calculate areas of shapes. 17.2 Make scale drawings using ratios other than 1:10 2 2 1:50 or 1:100.
MEASURING WEIGHTS AND VOLUMES IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS	4.1 Measure weights using metric and imperial units. 4.2 Weigh out quantities using metric and imperial units. 4.3 Measure out required volumes using metric and imperial units.	12.1 Calculate and weigh out quantities involving doubling, quadrupling, halving, quartering using metric and imperial units. 12.2 Calculate and measure out volumes involving doubling, quadrupling, halving, quartering using metric and imperial units.	
CONVERTING IMPERIAL UNITS OF LENGTH TO METRIC UNITS AND VICE VERSA IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS			18.1 Convert metric to imperial units of length and vice versa. 18.2 Estimate conversions from metric to imperial units of length and vice versa.
SETTING TIMING DEVICES AND TIMING ACTIVITIES IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS	5.1 Time and record activities from analogue and digital displays. 5.2 Set timing devices showing analogue and digital displays.		
GIVING AND FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS	6.1 Give directions and include estimated distances, times, landmarks. 6.2 Follow directions to an unfamiliar place given orally or from a route marked on a map.		
REPORTING NUMERICAL AND GRAPHICAL INFORMATION TAKEN FROM EVERYDAY SITUATIONS	7.1 Report information from simple tables (2 columns), pie charts (4 divisions), bar charts and pictograms (2 variables). 7.2 Report orally or in writing information presented in numbers. 7.3 Count and report on batches, quantities between 25 and 1000.		
INTERPRETING AND PRESENTING NUMERICAL AND GRAPHICAL INFORMATION TAKEN FROM EVERYDAY SITUATIONS		13.1 Report information from tables (up to 4 columns), 2 2 pie charts (4-8 divisions), bar charts and pictograms (2 variables, 4-8 reports), line graphs. 13.2 Extract and use information from tables (up to 4 2 2 columns), pie charts (4-8 divisions), bar charts and pictograms (2 variables, 4-8 reports). 13.3 Round numbers up or down and report the information orally or in writing. 13.4 Present information on a table (up to 4 columns), 2 2 a bar chart (2 variables, 4-8 reports), a pictogram (2 variables, 4-8 reports), line graphs.	19.1 Select and use information from a variety of tables and charts, including tables (more than 4 columns), pie charts, bar charts and pictograms (up to 3 variables, 4-8 reports), line graphs. 19.2 Round up or down information presented in numbers and report the information orally or in writing. 19.3 Choose appropriate tables and charts on which to present information including tables with more than 4 columns, a bar chart or pictogram (up to 3 variables, 4-8 reports), a line graph.

NCVQ Core Skills Level

For further information

SECTION 1

Literacy, Numeracy and Adults
published by ALBSU

The Cost To Industry
published by ALBSU

The Basic Skills Needed At Work – a directory
published by ALBSU

Basic Skills and Jobs
published by ALBSU

Making It Happen
published by ALBSU

The Basic Skills of Young Adults
published by ALBSU

SECTION 2

Assessing Reading and Maths
published by ALBSU

Investing in People
Employment Department Moorfoot, Sheffield

SECTION 3

Improving Basic Skills in the Workplace – Catering and Hospitality
published by ALBSU

Resources Guide
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